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Hard hit by June flood

Alberta town to let one area return to natural state

An Alberta town hit hard by flooding in June has decided to buy out one neighbourhood and leave it undeveloped. High River Mayor Craig Snodgrass says council has agreed with engineers to let the neighbourhood of Wallaceville return to its natural state. Snodgrass says doing this will also protect the rest of the community.

"The decision to return Wallaceville to an undeveloped state was not taken lightly, however we do believe it is the responsible direction to take, and we know that the property owners need a decision so they can move forward," he said in a release. The mayor says Wallaceville, which has repeatedly flooded, was one of the hardest hit areas of the flood because it sits at a critical choke point along the Highwood River.

Reiley McKerracker, manager of engineering for High River, says in order to protect Wallaceville, a 3.2-metre-high dike would have to be built around it. He says the feasibility of doing that was questionable.

The properties to be included in the Wallaceville naturalization are those contained between Lineham Canal and the main channel of the Highwood River along and east of Centre Street.

Valuation of the properties in the neighbourhood will be based on 2013 municipal tax assessments. Details on the property purchase program will be available in January.

Those who own property in the area but do not live there should call 403-603-3583. THE CANADIAN PRESS

University of Calgary provost Dru Marshall said the school will still need to pay careful attention to its allocation of resources in the years ahead as it still remains about $21 million short on provincial funding compared to where it was expected to be. METRO FILE

U of C to hire 60 staff in new year

Money boost.
Funds will mean more student spaces too

JEREMY NOLAIS
Metro in Calgary

It appears the new year will call for celebrations at the University of Calgary.

School provost Dru Marshall announced Monday that the school will use an injection of cash from the provincial government to hire 60 new academic and support staff in 2014 and also plan to add a few hundred student spaces in high-demand programs as well.

The additional resources come after officials met last week to determine how best to use $10.6 million kicked in by the provincial government in an early November announcement that saw a total of $50 million spread across post-secondary schools hit hard in the March budget. The U of C's funding was drained by about $32 million in March, Marshall said.

She added the school hopes to hire a balance of professors and support staff between April and September of 2014.

As for student spaces, the U of C will add 30 over the next three years in law, its highest-demand program where only one in 15 students that apply are accepted. Engineering will also see 50 spaces added next year and the same number the following year with the intention those students utilize a $142-million government-funded expansion of the on-campus Schulich School of Engineering.

Nursing will also see eight students added per year for the next four years. Finally, another 68 doctoral student spaces will be opened in various departments on campus, Marshall said.

"We've strategically cut and what we've just done is strategically reinvest," she said. "I would still say ... we need to think very carefully about a sustainable model going forward and I would still say that we have a number of exercises to go through to determine what the underpinning model will look like for the University of Calgary."

University faculty association head Paul Rogers said staffing levels at the university have dropped by 24 positions over the past five years.

"During that period, I know enrolment has gone up substantially," he said. "So, anything that gets more staff on the ground is a good news item."

Even still, Rogers noted the U of C's cut in March was 9.3 per cent from once-promised funding, adding the unpredictable funding pattern, "makes it impossible for post-secondary institutions to plan effectively for the future."

Higher education

The new spaces come as U of C turns away more students than any time in recent memory. In 2012-13, just one of every 2.38 qualified applicants was accepted, that's up from 2.04 in 2007-08.

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Is police chief too high on roadside testing for drugs?

It's high time ... to not change. Expert says screening potentially impaired drivers can be counterproductive

BRYAN WEISMILLER
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When it comes to drug-testing drivers suspected of being high, Calgary cops should be careful what they wish for — at least according to one expert.

Veteran researcher Doug Beirness says the science isn't yet practical for police services to screen motorists for drug impairment the same way officers currently check for booze.

"You can't just get your friend Bob's little machine that he's thought up and brings out on the road to detect drugs," said Beirness of the Canadian Centre on Substance Abuse.

His comments contrast with those of Police Chief Rick Hanson, who recently told Metro "the science is there" to test suspected drugged drivers as he called for the federal government to approve roadside-testing devices and per se limits.

Beirness agreed there are oral fluid tests that can detect 70 to 80 per cent of the "main players" such as pot, cocaine and opiates.

But he also pointed to Australia, where he contends the authorities are so afraid of wrongful assessments that they set the bar too high for positive tests. For simplicity, he used an analogy to highlight the problem.

"You end up with the equivalent of picking off the really drunk drivers instead of the impaired drivers."

Beirness warned there are also risks when dealing in increments as small as nanograms.

"We're not splitting the atom here," he said of the federally sponsored centre. "But what we're looking for are molecules."

On the other hand, he agreed with a Calgary drug-recognition expert's assessment that street cops need to do a better job recognizing suspicious drivers to make the current system work.

A federal committee is studying the issue.

Police have been outspoken in 2013 over the number of Calgarians skirting drug-impaired laws when they pass through checkstops like this. METRO FILE

In numbers

- There are 11 drug recognition experts in Calgary, down from 20 last year. The experts conduct a 12-step process that's invaluable to laying criminal charges.
- In 2013, up to the end August — the newest numbers provided — there were roughly 1,200 one-day vehicle suspensions doled out.

Analysis

Could cops really breath-test for drugs?

One of the world's leading researchers on drug testing says it's scientifically possible to detect street drugs using a roadside breathalyzer-type device.

In an email interview, Swedish professor Olof Beck pointed to his research published in 2013 that found the active ingredients of pot, methamphetamine and cocaine could be detected on a person's breath.

"We have data pointing to the fact that drugs are present in parallel in breath and blood," said Beck, of the prestigious Karolinska Institute in Stockholm. "Breath tests can replace the need for blood sampling." Blood, urine and saliva samples are the most common ways for authorities to test for drugs.

In his research, 40 patients were tested using a commercially available breath sampler. The subjects had taken drugs within 24 hours and the scientists were able to detect a dozen substances.

Police Chief Rick Hanson wants the government to approve roadside screening devices.

BRYAN WEISMILLER/METRO

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Strathmore man killed in highway collision

Terry Chicilo, 49.
Wife remembers her husband, who was delivering Christmas baskets when he died

JEREMY NOLAIS
jeremy.nolais@metronews.ca

Sandra Watson remembers planting two kisses on husband Terry Chicilo last Wednesday morning before they both set off for the day.

Chicilo was heading in early with plans to drop off Christmas baskets along the way to family members of the company he worked for, Bruce Farms. In all likelihood, the 49-year-old Strathmore husband and father stopped and chatted up each recipient.

"He was just a guy that would always make people feel welcome," Watson explained. "He would start conversations with people in grocery lineups ... they just opened up to him."

Chicilo's journey had barely begun along Highway 24 — a route he travelled every day — when he was involved in a multiple-vehicle crash. His vehicle was struck by a truck belonging to Kenworth and he died on scene.

"I did see him pass me to turn onto Highway 24," Watson recalled. "I have been trying to figure it out — it would have been less than five minutes later (that) he would have been gone."

Watson works for a Kenworth dealership. "That irony is not lost on me but I'll have to deal with that later," she said.

RCMP have informed Watson they're still investigating the crash but have ruled out that her husband was to blame.

Chicilo left behind a daughter in her early 20s from a previous marriage, as well as three stepchildren.

He met Watson at the 2002 Brier curling bonspiel in Calgary and the pair moved to Strathmore in 2009 — one of Chicilo's first orders of business was raising a flag honouring his beloved Roughriders.

Watson said she's been overwhelmed with support and seemingly endless stories from her husband's many friends.

A memorial service is planned for Friday at Calgary's Mountain View Memorial Gardens.

Strathmore resident Terry Chicilo was killed in a crash on Highway 24 on Dec. 18. CONTRIBUTED

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ALERT weathering funding loss

Calgary's police chief says he's confident an Alberta law-enforcement squad will weather a storm created by an end to federal recruitment funding.

The future of the Alberta Law Enforcement Response Teams (ALERT) was left uncertain after it was revealed a federal compensation package first offered to every province to boost officer recruitment in 2008 would run out.

The feds first announced the $42.4 million in 2008 and Alberta used its portion to establish ALERT, a specialized unit that relies on officer secondments from municipal police services and focuses on tackling organized crime, drug trafficking and child pornography.

Calgary Police Chief Rick Hanson first went public with concerns about ALERT's funding in February, but said in a year-end interview earlier this month the provincial government is adjusting its model to ensure the organization's "key areas" remain intact.

JEREMY NOLAIS/METRO

Annual report

The Alberta Law Enforcement Response Teams charged nearly 700 people and laid nearly 2,300 charges in 2012-13, according to the organization's annual report. During that period, officers also seized more than $8 million worth of possessions paid for with the proceeds of crime. The increase in charges was up 50 per cent from last year.

$876 hotel stay on us

Redford named to 'naughty' list

The Canadian Taxpayers Federation has put Alberta Premier Alison Redford at the top of its provincial government "naughty" list for staying in a Washington hotel that charged $876 a night. The federation says Redford's posted expense claims also show she charged taxpayers for $22 coffees and a $31 hamburger while in the U.S. capital.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Fire. Man charged with attempted murder, arson

A Hobbema man has been charged with attempted murder after he allegedly stabbed a 50-year-old man and then set his house on fire, said RCMP.

Ryan Okeynan, 26, was arrested shortly after authorities responded to a house fire in the Samson Cree Nation.

The victim was found with multiple stab wounds at a neighbour's residence. RCMP suspect the victim attempted to flee his burning house.

Police seeking info

Anyone with information on the incident is being asked to call Crime Stoppers at 1-800-222-8477.

Along with attempted murder, Okeynan is being charged with aggravated assault, arson and breach of conditions.

LEAH GERMAIN/METRO

Southside commute: Deerfoot or Stoney Trail?

Morning commute put to the test. Metro managing editor compares drive times, conditions on two roads

DARREN KRAUSE
darren.krause@metronews.ca

Is one route better than the other? Depends on who you ask. We put the morning commute on newly opened Stoney Trail up against the grind on Deerfoot. DARREN KRAUSE/METRO

Ring-road trailblazers will tell you the northern half of Calgary's newest freeway can get you across the city in the blink of an eye.

No more traversing light-laden stretches of jam-packed roadways to get from the airport to Tuscany. It's smooth sailing, they say.

With the Nov. 22 opening of the southeast leg of the Stoney Trail passage, drivers, including me, were given a road less travelled in their daily commute. So, I decided to put the two roads to the test in a drive-time comparison.

THE EXPERIMENT

I live in Okotoks and our newsroom is just off Memorial Drive and Deerfoot Trail in the northeast. The ride via Deerfoot is 44 kilometres and via Stoney it's 51 kilometres.

The morning commute typically gives me the most trouble, and I leave home around the same time (8:20 a.m.), so that's the best comparison. For argument's sake, let's just say I can get home on either route in roughly 30 minutes.

On Days 1, 3 and 5, I drove Deerfoot Trail. The drive times were 37, 38 and 45 minutes. On Days 2 and 4, I drove Stoney Trail. The times: 38 and 45 minutes, respectively.

Statistically, it's easy to see the drive times are roughly the same. I drove in miserable weather on both routes (Stoney was much better to drive on under wintry conditions), and I drove in clear roads on both.

OBSERVATIONS

Deerfoot is Deerfoot. Coming from the south you have your big slowdown at 130th Avenue SE, as the cars from numerous neighbourhoods clog the road just before Anderson Road pinches things off. I've been driving this route for nearly seven years, and nothing's changed. It's expected. Typical top speed is around 90 km/h but bottom speed is … zero.

Stoney Trail is a different beast. I felt like I was driving the TransCanada Highway through Saskatchewan. There's nothing but open highway, and I felt compelled to open the throttle and keep my eyes out for radar. Average speed was 100-110 km/h (maybe 120) on clear roads. Even with snow, I could manage 80 km/h.

For what it's worth, Stoney has more exit points than I realized, with routes on 114 Avenue, Peigan Trail, Glenmore Trail, 17 Avenue SE and then 16 Avenue NE.

ANALYSIS

With all things being relatively equal in terms of time on the road, here's additional food for thought.

The beauty of driving Stoney is that you're a body in motion that tends to stay in motion. That's infinitely more comforting than the stops and starts on a typical south-end Deerfoot commute. The peace of mind knowing I'm not going to be bogged down in pea-soup-thick traffic is immeasurable.

Furthermore, according to the Calgary police, up to October's end the police logged 2,014 crashes on or around Deerfoot Trail (roughly six per day), adding to further delays. In contrast, Stoney saw 280 crashes. Suffice to say you can almost expect a Deerfoot delay at some point in your commute.

CONCLUSION

Stoney Trail is a viable alternative for me. But, as you'll see above, it depends on where you're travelling from, where you're going to and what time of day you are driving.

But my advice — if you're tired of the Deerfoot grind, give Stoney Trail a try. You might just find it's worth it.

Depends who you ask …

Start and end point key for effective ring road commute

Even the biggest boosters of the southeast ring road say a successful commute on the newly minted stretch rests on where you start and where you are headed.

The province opened the southeast portion of the ring road Nov. 22 after a weeks-long delay. The hope was that some traffic would be siphoned off around the city, freeing up often frustrating gridlock on Deerfoot Trail.

Coun. Shane Keating said he's heard from people that the new route has shaved off 15 or more minutes from their daily commutes.

"I'm very surprised at the amount of traffic," said Keating, who can see the No. 201 from his southeast Calgary home.

The Ward 12 rep admits it's even dropped his city hall commute from 45 minutes to 30.

But it's not a panacea to Deerfoot woes, he said, reeling off a number of problems accessing Stoney from various southeast communities, limiting its potential effectiveness for some.

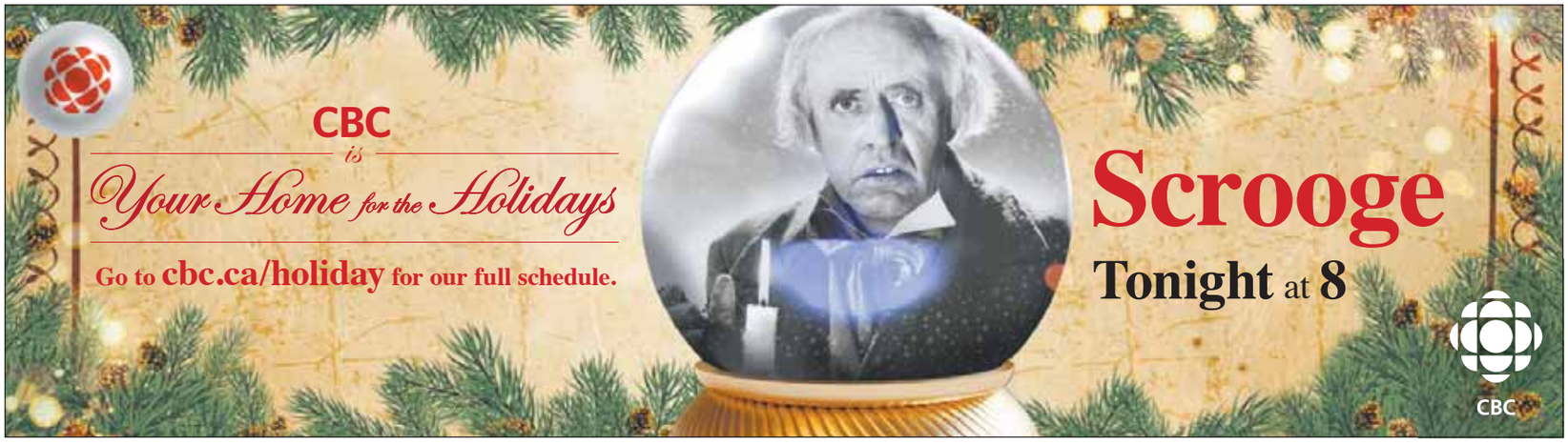
That's a problem for Cranston residents and the president of the area community association, Shane Byciuk.

"When it first opened, I was getting 50 calls a day frustrated that there's no access to Stoney Trail," said Byciuk.

Byciuk said the route is great if you want to bypass Deerfoot and duck into the city's fringe, but he didn't see the benefit for those searching for an alternative to their downtown trek.

Still, Byciuk is looking into the distant future before passing judgment. "(Stoney Trail) is not for everyone. But neither is Deerfoot. Ten years from now, though, I think we're going to love having it."

DARREN KRAUSE/METRO



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Chadian forces wound at least two in drive-by

Young men react after their friend was badly injured by passing Chadian troops during a protest outside M'Poko Airport in Bangui, Central African Republic, on Monday. Hundreds of demonstrators gathered to protest Chadian forces and express support for French troops and other regional African forces. At least two people were wounded as pickups of Chadian soldiers sped through the crowd firing off several rounds. REBECCA BLACKWELL/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Reputed Montreal mob boss Rizzuto is dead

Vito Rizzuto, the reputed head of the Montreal Mafia who built a powerful criminal organization with international tentacles, died in hospital Monday.

Rizzuto, 67, passed away of natural causes, said Maude Hebert-Chaput of Montreal's Sacre-Coeur Hospital.

His death raises questions about the future of the Rizzuto clan's decades-old empire, which was crippled by his 2006 extradition to the United States.

Rizzuto was arrested by Canadian authorities in 2004 and extradited two years later to the U.S., where he was convicted for his role in the 1981 murder of three Bonanno crime-family members in New York City.

He was sentenced to 10 years in prison, minus time served while awaiting extradition.

He returned to Canada following his October 2012 release. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Vito Rizzuto THE CANADIAN PRESS FILE

Pussy Riot is free, but say it's not a victory

'This is a hoax and a PR move.' Band members say their release is a 'cosmetic measure,' call for ban on Olympics

Two members of the Russian punk band Pussy Riot walked free Monday, criticizing the amnesty measure that released them as a publicity stunt, with one calling for a boycott of the Winter Olympics to protest Russia's human rights record.

Maria Alekhina and Nadezhda Tolokonnikova were granted amnesty last week in a move largely viewed as the Kremlin's attempt to soothe criticism of Russia's human rights record before the Games in Sochi in February.

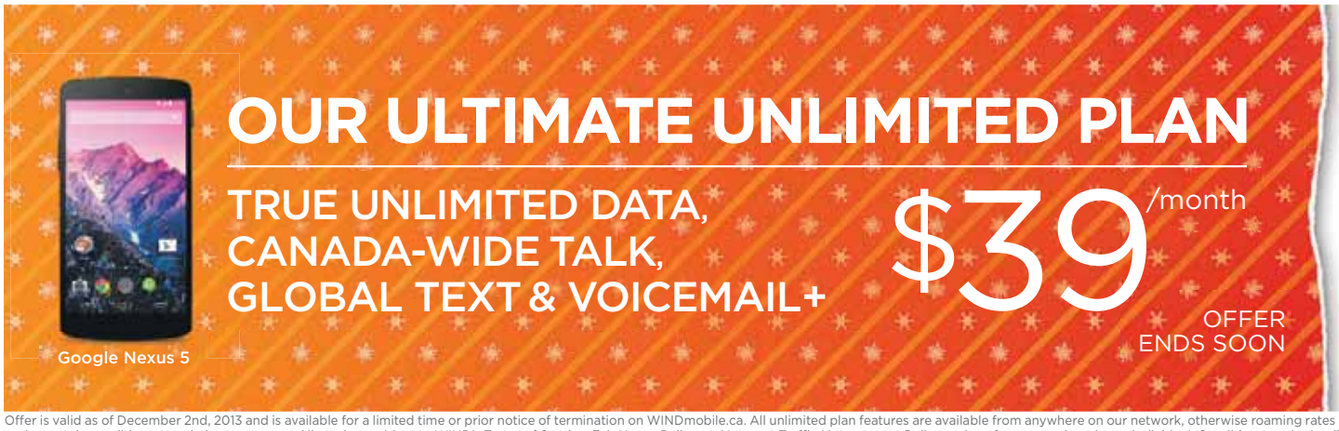
"I'm calling for a boycott of the Olympic Games," Tolokonnikova said. "What is happening today — releasing people just a few months before their term expires — is a cosmetic measure."

Another member of the band, Yekaterina Samutsevich, was previously released on a suspended sentence. All three were found guilty of hooliganism motivated by religious hatred and sentenced to two years in prison for a guerrilla performance at Moscow's main cathedral in March 2012.

Nadezhda Tolokonnikova, the third member of Russian punk bank Pussy Riot to be released from custody following an amnesty law passed by parliament, leaves prison in Krasnoyarsk, Russia, on Monday. TATYANA VISHNEVSKAYA/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

The band members said their protest was meant to highlight their concern about increasingly close ties between the state and the church.

Russia's parliament passed the amnesty bill last week, allowing the release of thousands of inmates. Alekhina and Tolokonnikova, who were due for release in March, qualified for amnesty because they have small children. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS



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Hydro crews work around the clock to get lights on

Ice storm. Hundreds of thousands in Ontario, Quebec and New Brunswick may still be without power on Christmas Day

A nasty ice storm that left hundreds of thousands without power in Ontario and Quebec tracked through the Maritimes on Monday as authorities worked frantically to clear tree-strewn roadways, restore downed hydro lines and get stranded travellers to their destinations.

Hydro companies in the Greater Toronto Area — which appeared to be the hardest hit by the weather system — warned some residents to brace for the possibility of being without power until Boxing Day or later.

Some neighbourhoods resembled crime scenes with yellow police tape used to cordon off areas where electric wires or large trees had come crashing down over the weekend. Sidewalks around some high rise buildings were also closed off due to the risk of falling ice.

Meanwhile, travellers trying to get home for the holidays continued to face delays and cancellations on airlines and trains.

Environment Canada said the storm had hit Eastern Canada hard. "It was a mighty blow," said senior climatologist David Phillips.

The weather agency said the system had turned particularly vicious thanks to a combination of warm air from Texas colliding with cold air over Canada to create a drawn-out period of freezing rain.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

A crew subcontracted to assist with restoring power following the ice storm in Toronto works on a power line on Monday. MATTHEW SHERWOOD/THE CANADIAN PRESS

Power outages

- Though some 215,000 customers in the Greater Toronto Area were still without power, Toronto Mayor Rob Ford insisted Monday that Canada's largest city was not in a state of emergency.
- In Quebec, nearly 45,000 customers remained without power, largely in the province's Eastern Townships.
- In New Brunswick, NB Power said more than 21,000 customers were without power.

Newcastle, Ont.

Two dead from carbon monoxide

Police in an area east of Toronto say two people are dead after carbon monoxide seeped into their home from a gas generator in the garage. A 52-year-old man and his 72-year-old mother were rushed to hospital but did not survive.

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Shezanne Cassim of Minnesota, sentenced to jail Monday for humour crime. COURTESY SHERVON CASSIM/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Jailed in the UAE for satirical online video

United Arab Emirates. Eight people sentenced to up to a year in prison

A court in the United Arab Emirates sentenced eight people to up to a year in prison Monday after being convicted in connection with a satirical video about youth culture in Dubai.

The video they produced and uploaded to the Internet was a spoof documentary of would-be "gangsta" youth in the Gulf Arab nation. The state-owned daily The National said they were accused of "defaming the image of United Arab Emirates society abroad." Supporters reported that they were charged under a 2012 cybercrimes law.

Shezanne Cassim, a 29-year-old U.S. citizen from Woodbury, Minn., became the public face of the defendants after his family launched an effort to publicize his months-long incarceration following his arrest in April.

American consular officials have been following the case closely and attended Monday's hearing in Abu Dhabi.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Above, Blake as a happy 7 year-old.
Now you know where homeless adults can come from.

{ Blake, currently homeless }

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Mikhail Kalashnikov.
Designer of AK-47 assault rifle dies at 94

Mikhail Kalashnikov, the creator of the world's most popular firearm.
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS FILE

Mikhail Kalashnikov started out wanting to make farm equipment, but the harvest he reaped was one of blood as the designer of the AK-47 assault rifle, the world's most popular firearm.

It was the carnage of World War II, when Nazi Germany overran much of the Soviet Union, which altered his course and made his name as well-known for bloodshed as Smith, Wesson and Colt. The distinctive shape of the gun, often called "a Kalashnikov," appeared on revolutionary flags and adorns memorabilia.

Kalashnikov died Monday at age 94 in a hospital in Izhevsk, the capital of the Udmurtia republic where he lived, said Viktor Chulkov, a spokesman for the republic's president. He did not give a cause of death. Kalashnikov had been hospitalized for the past month with unspecified health problems.

The AK-47 — "Avtomat Kalashnikov" and the year it went into production — is the world's most popular firearm, favoured by guerrillas, terrorists and the soldiers of many armies. An estimated 100 million guns are spread worldwide.

Though it isn't especially accurate, its ruggedness and simplicity are exemplary: it performs in sandy or wet conditions which jam more sophisticated weapons such as the U.S. M-16.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Clear conscience

"I sleep well. It's the politicians who are to blame for failing to come to an agreement and resorting to violence."

Mikhail Kaslashnikov, often said he felt personally untroubled by his contribution to bloodshed.

Market reacts to Apple's deal with China Mobile

Fighting back. Alliance is tech giant's latest attempt to gain smartphone-market share in world's most populous country

A woman using a phone walks past Apple's logo near its retail outlet in Beijing Monday. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Apple's stock rose 3 per cent in morning trading on Monday, a day after the company announced a long-anticipated agreement to bring the iPhone to China Mobile, the world's biggest phone company.

The deal has the potential to boost iPhone sales in a market where Apple Inc. faces intense competition. But even with China Mobile Ltd.'s vast state-owned network, marketing power and more than 750 million mobile accounts, the iPhone has enormous challenges to overcome in the world's most populous nation.

Apple's smartphone is already available in China through two smaller carriers, and although it is popular with well-heeled Chinese customers, the iPhone is losing market share to lower-priced smartphones from Samsung and local brands.

The iPhone 5S and 5C will go on sale in Apple and China Mobile stores beginning Friday, Jan. 17. China Mobile customers can register for phones starting Wednesday.

The companies didn't announce pricing or the terms of the agreement.

The deal comes a month before China's Lunar New Year holiday in late January, a big gift-buying season. That "will provide an immediate boost to Apple's share in China," said analyst Nicole Peng of Canalys, a research firm.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Viva Las Vegas turnin' day into Christmastime

Brothers Joaquin, left, and Sebastian visit with the Red Queen during the third-annual Winter in Venice event at the Venetian hotel-casino on the Las Vegas Strip Dec. 5. Las Vegas casinos have begun staging elaborate Christmas events in recent years to attract tourists during the slow winter months.
HANNAH DREIER/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Same as Oct. 2012

October federal deficit totals $2.5B

The federal government ran a deficit of $2.5 billion in October, unchanged from the same month last year.

The monthly fiscal monitor said Monday that the federal government's revenue slipped by $100 million as an increase in personal income tax and other sources was offset by lower revenue from corporate taxes and the GST.

Meanwhile, Ottawa's program spending increased by $100 million in October, while public debt charges fell $200 million.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Montreal company Cinar

Animator wins copyright case

The Supreme Court of Canada ruled Friday in favour of a Montreal animator in his long-running battle over copyright infringement.

Claude Robinson had already won at the Quebec Court of Appeal, which ruled that the Montreal company, Cinar, had essentially copied his idea for a children's television show.

Robinson was originally awarded more than $5 million in damages, so Cinar appealed to the Supreme Court, and has now lost.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Market Minute

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TSX 13,447.70 (+ 48.10)

OIL $98.91 US (- $0. 41)

GOLD $1,197 US (- $6.70)

Natural gas: $4.48 US (- 0.01)
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HAPPY BIRTHDAY, CHRISTMAS BABY

SHE SAYS

Jessica Napier
metronews.ca

I'm going to take a moment to abuse my power as a newspaper columnist and send a very Happy Birthday shout-out to my boyfriend. Yes, my poor significant other has a dreaded Christmas Eve birthday. Even his name — Christopher — echoes the omnipresent holiday that falls on his special day.

Often overlooked and forgotten during the busy holiday season, he has quite a few childhood stories of birthdays spent alone at the ice rink and forced "half-birthday" celebrations in June that always seemed a bit lackluster.

He is not alone in his misery. Many Capricorn babies are quite vocal about their ill-timed birthdates and the dreaded Birthday-Christmas combo gifts. Why is it that a joint gift would be a complete outrage for an individual born in June but it's totally justifiable for anyone afflicted with a December 25th adjacent birthdate?

There are even parenting blogs dedicated to helping couples avoid conceiving a baby with a holiday due date. In case you're wondering, it's best to avoid the bedroom around the end of March if you want to skip a Christmastime delivery.

I am blessed with a mid-August birthday which always meant pool parties with friends and sun-kissed picnics in the park. I recognize how fortunate I am — I have never received a tree ornament as a birthday gift — and as such, I believe that all late December babies are fully entitled to their self-righteous whining. Sulk away Christmas babies! Because regardless of whether or not you choose to celebrate, this eternally merry and bright holiday is impossible to ignore.

Competing with Christmas is not an option and so yuletide birthdays will inevitably become an afterthought. Birthday gifts are wrapped in snowman-print paper, tinsel garlands adorn the hallways instead of balloons and banners, and an abundance of gingerbread cookies and candy canes are placed around the house so that requesting an actual birthday cake seems out of the question.

Worse still is the absence of people willing and available to celebrate your special day. Absentee friends are out of town or suffering from holiday party fatigue. Even those high school acquaintances you never speak to are too distracted to remember to leave an obligatory 'Happy Birthday' Facebook wall post.

Of course there are some perks: Everyone is already in a celebratory mood, you'll probably have the day off work or school, and you'll be surrounded by all of your family (this may or may not be a good thing). If you're very lucky, perhaps some sympathetic friends and family will try to overcompensate with some extra special attention.

But perhaps we can all take a little time this holiday season to do our part to make the neglected birthday boys and girls feel extra special. And please, no combo gifts.

Follow Jessica Napier on Twitter @MetroSheSays

ZOOM

Photog captures icy bear stare

COURTESY PAUL SOUDERS/NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC PHOTO CONTEST

Polar bear pic wins top award

An eerie picture of a polar bear lurking beneath melting sea ice has won the grand prize of the 2013 National Geographic Photo Contest.

Seattle-based photographer Paul Souders captured this striking image last year in Hudson Bay, as the setting midnight sun glowed red from the smoke of distant fires. METRO

Q and A

'Hasn't been done before'

PAUL SOUDERS
Wildlife and travel photographer, 52, based in Seattle, Wash.

How did this photograph come about?
In July last year, I travelled to Churchill, Man., and in my inflatable zodiac boat I found one bear. She swam up to an iceberg, ducked under and stayed underwater for several seconds. She hung there, just below the surface, watching me, then came up for another breath before swimming away.

The polar bear looks pensive yet menacing. How does she seem to you?
It's so spooky, knowing that the bear was peering back at me, so watchful and curious. It really feels like a moment of communion and trust for me.

Why do you think it caught the judges' eyes?
It's pretty tough to create a picture that hasn't been done before, and I think maybe this is one of them.

Clickbait

LUKE SIMCOE
Metro Online

ISTOCKIMAGES

Maybe you want to save the environment. Maybe you just want to save time. Or maybe it's Christmas Eve and you forgot to send your mother a card. No matter your reason, Metro has you covered with a few ways to use social media as a substitute for a holiday card.

Facebook:
The world's most popular social media site is actually pretty full-featured when it comes to disseminating holiday cheer. You can craft a simple status update, tag your friends and family in a post, or upload and share a Christmas-themed photo album.

Instaquote:
Available for both iOS and Android, this simple app lets you superimpose text onto Instagram shots. Grandma is sure to love a selfie captioned with "Season's Greetings!"

Touchnote.com:
If you just can't go without the tactile sensation of a tacky Christmas card, consider Touchnote. The site lets you make a card using their online editor and then actually mails it for you to. No more licking stamps!

Comments

RE: Nova Scotia Still Bucking Boxing Day Trend By Keeping Stores Closed On Dec. 26, published online Dec. 23

A government shouldn't even have any say on when a business can open or not. We live in a free country.
Mythos88 posted to metronews.ca

Good for N.S. and let's keep it up. Retail workers already get so few real holiday days (because most so called 'holidays' only benefit students/teachers and certain government workers) to spend with their families, now heaven forbid greedy people might have to, gasp, wait two days to buy their Boxing Day sales items!
Jillian posted to metronews.ca

WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU:
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Bruce Willis wallops the legacy of John McClane for a quick paycheque in A Good Way to Die Hard. CONTRIBUTED

The worst of film in 2013

Forgettable fare.
In a year of great films, there were still plenty of stinkers

NED EHRBAR
Metro World News in Hollywood

Yesterday we looked at some of the best films of 2013. Today, to balance out that bright note, we look at some of the dark spots of 2014.

Man of Steel

While there may have been many technically worse films this year, Zack Snyder's bombastic, tone-deaf update on Superman fails on a spectacularly higher level. Consider it a weighted grade. Moralizing, wanton destruction and clumsy product placement are a tough mix.

A Good Way to Die Hard

Bruce Willis further tarnishes the legacy of John McClane with this loud and un-fun entry that's a Die Hard film in name only. Maybe he's squinting the whole time because he can't bear to look at what he's creating.

Safe Haven

Romance-loving audiences deserve better than this poorly executed dreck from the mind of bestseller Nicholas Sparks. From the wooden acting to the contrived plot to the limping pacing, this would've seemed bad as a Lifetime movie.

Free Birds

Kids' movies generally get more of a pass critically, but some things we can't let slide. Children deserve better than this odd, clumsy tale of turkeys stealing a time machine to change the menu at the first Thanksgiving.

The Last Stand

The kitschy 1980s action tropes that made Arnold Schwarzenegger a star just don't work anymore, as the former California governor painfully learned when no one showed up to see his first starring vehicle since returning to acting. Bizarre character actor Peter Stormare attempting a Texas accent almost makes it worth enduring. Almost.

The Host

There's a certain amount of satisfaction to be taken in watching Twilight guru Stephenie Meyer's attempt at a follow-up franchise crash and burn, but it's a shame it had to involve the lovely Saoirse Ronan. Still, she should come out of this fine.

Delivery Man

Listen, if Vince Vaughn isn't going to bother showing up for his films anymore, why should we? Paying to watch a haggard movie star sleepwalk through scenes doesn't sound like very much fun.

Stand Up Guys

Al Pacino and Christopher Walken as aging wiseguys felt like a throwback itself in all the wrong ways. And in a year dispiritingly full of signs of creeping chauvinism and misogyny, this was one of the worst offenders.

Romeo and Juliet

Julian Fellowes' take on Shakespeare's classic teens at least gave audiences a new appreciation for Baz Luhrmann.

Comedy

Grudge Match

Director. Peter Segal

Stars. Robert De Niro

Rocky or Raging Bull, who would prevail in a boxing match? That's the question asked in Grudge Match. Robert De Niro and Sylvester Stallone star as retired Pittsburgh boxers who get the chance to step back in the ring to settle a three decade old grudge and make "Kardashian sex tape" kind of money. This is a new story, occasionally funny and touching, but with lots of elements borrowed from other classic movies. **RICHARD CROUSE**

Biography/Comedy

The Wolf of Wall Street

Director. Martin Scorsese

Stars. Leonardo DiCaprio

Set during Wall Street's cocaine and hookers era, The Wolf of Wall Street is based on real life brokers Jordan Belfort (Leonard DiCaprio) and Donnie Azoff (Jonah Hill), who snorted and scammed their way to the top, only to become the subject of an FBI investigation into financial corruption. With its fourth wall breaking narration, scandalous set pieces and absurd antics this is a wild cinematic experience. At three hours it's almost as excessive as Balfort's $26,000 dinners.
RICHARD CROUSE

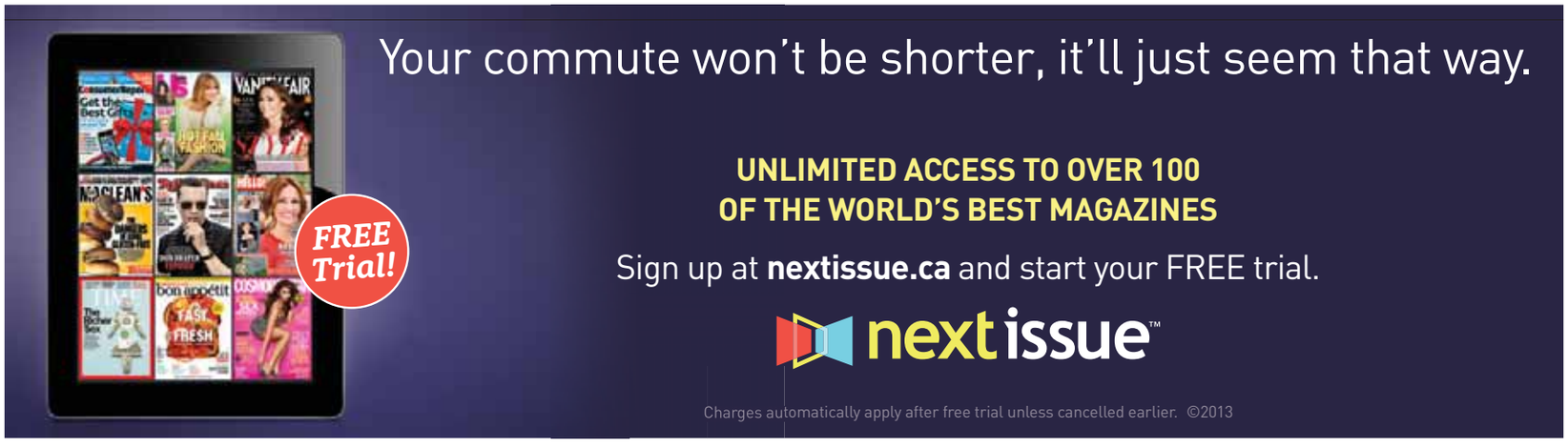
Biography/Drama

Mandela: Long Walk to Freedom

Director. Justin Chadwick

Stars. Idris Elba, Naomie Harris

Nelson Mandela's life is so astonishing even Hollywood cannot seem to bring its incredulity to life. Based on his autobiography, Mandela: Long Walk to Freedom attempts to cram the subject's lifetime battle against apartheid into 139 minutes and the result only dilutes the measure of the late South African President's story. It winds up more encyclopedic than epic. **STEVE GOW**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Beyoncé

Attention Walmart shoppers, there's a Beyoncé in aisle four

The Queen Bey visited a Massachusetts Walmart before her Boston concert on Friday and spread some holiday cheer to the tune of $39,800.

The singer, who might be the only human alive (other than Yeezus, of course) rivaling Miley in the headline-making department, did a mic-check on a Tewskbury Walmart's PA system and announced that she would pay the first $50 of every customer's purchase.

Which, of course, is super nice. But also, what? What compelled Beyoncé (other than a top notch PR team who I'm sure gently suggested this might be a not-terrible stunt to pull) to casually drop by a Walmart in nowheresville, Mass., and pay for some last-minute holidays shoppers' layaway crap? I'm not saying it was a bad stunt, I'm just saying it's a random one. Anyway, this is all to say that Beyoncé's image as one of the most likable (and that's saying a lot, because it's pretty easy to hate someone so fabulous) ladies in the biz isn't in danger of cracking anytime soon. **METRO**

Twitter

@robdelaney
Just saw a Hasidic man & 2 Asian girls laugh at a dog knocking over a garbage can so don't even act like peace isn't possible guys.

@Brittanysnow
I bet cats really hate the fact that they can't hashtag #yolo

@RebelWilson
All this reminds me of when I got kicked out of an 'Open House' Pretty Woman style last weekend coz the broker thought I couldn't afford it

METRO DISH

OUR TAKE ON THE WORLD OF CELEBRITIES

Holidays in Hollywood

Looks like Duck Dynasty won't be without a home

PAT HEALY
Metro World News

Aw, here's a heartwarming story just in time for the holidays. Thanks to Hunt Channel — a Christian television network that markets almost exclusively in reality shows about Bible-lovin', gun-totin' folks who kill defenseless creatures for sport — Duck Dynasty will not go homeless if A&E decides to drop it on its redneck butt.

A lot of people are calling for the network to pull the plug on Duck Dynasty — surprisingly one of the highest-rated reality shows of all time (proof, I think, of the rapid decline of our intelligence as a society thanks to the Internet and sexting and global warming or whatever) — after patriarch in charge Phil Robertson's recent eloquent musings on homosexuality. And, apparently, the other Duck Dynasty cast members are among those calling for the show to be yanked.

Robertson's brood of fellow people who like to make the duckies go bye-bye with the boom boom stick have his back, and have recently gone on record saying that they don't want to do the show without him.

Fortunately, the Hunt Channel is making it their business to ensure that they won't have to. A Christmas miracle!

According to a TMZ report, Hunt channel owner Merrill Sport thinks that A&E should "put on their big boy pants" and support the cast of Duck Dynasty for being the unapologetic bigots they are. Further, Sport is more than happy to put on his own pair of big kid trousers and air the show himself. Because, at Hunt Channel, he says, "we don't censor our personalities."

Paul Walker ALL PHOTOS GETTY IMAGES

Studio puts the brakes on Fast & Furious sequel in wake of tragedy

Universal Pictures has delayed the release of Fast & Furious 7 for almost a year following the death of star Paul Walker.

The studio announced Monday that the Fast & Furious sequel will be released in April 2015, instead of July next year. Shooting on the film was about halfway finished when the 40-year-old Walker died in a car crash outside of Los Angeles. Walker still will appear in the film, though Universal has not said exactly how it will handle his unfinished performance.

Co-star Vin Diesel first posted the news on Facebook, telling his fans that,

"He'd want you to know first."

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Miley beckons us into her boudoir, but do we really want to be there?

Have you guys seen this clip that's going around from Miley's new music video for her song Adore You?

If you haven't, because, I guess, you don't have a google alert set up for "Miley Cyrus" like I do, here's the relevant info:

It features grainy, sex tape-esque footage of Miley, er, pleasuring herself.

I guess we now have the answer to the age-old question "where does one in eternal pursuit of shock value and press go, after humping a foam finger while practically naked onstage?"

But, OK, I don't hate this. Miley Cyrus is a next-level entertainer and whoever is handling her PR right now deserves a big, fat holiday bonus. MyCy (I'm still totally going with this, and don't understand why nobody else has picked this up) was the most-googled person of the year, which is pretty damn impressive considering where she started.

Also, I'm sure there's an opportunity for a think piece on female empowerment and sexual freedom, etc, etc here. I'm not going to write it, I'm just saying there's a window here. **METRO**

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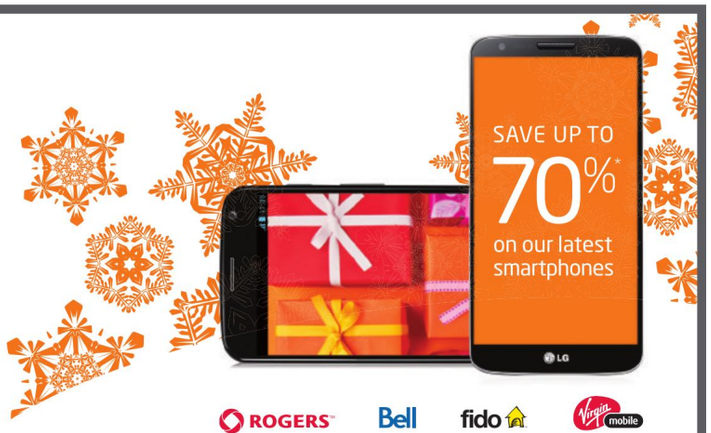

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Healthy highs and lows this year

In our look back at 2013: HIV cures, HIV scares and how a pet can save your life

MICHELLE CASTILLO
Metro World News

The next-gen condom couldn't have come sooner. THINKSTOCK

LOW: U.S. porn industry shuts down three times due to HIV scare

Debbie didn't do many people this year. Numerous HIV-positive test results in the U.S. porn industry forced a moratorium on production while all potentially infected performers were re-tested for the virus. Current regulations require porn stars to be tested every 14 days in the U.S., limiting the number of people who could be exposed. Still, this year's scares lead many to call for the use of condoms on set, which has led to much debate.

HIGH: The next-generation condom

No glove, no love may be the motto but many men, particularly in developing countries, remain adverse to the prophylactics. To encourage use, the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation offered $100,000 to anyone that could come up with the next evolution of the male condom, with up to $1 million for additional research. Eleven ideas won the first-round funding, including a condom made out of bovine tendons or fish skin and a couple versions made out of a crystallized form of carbon called graphene that can conduct heat.

HIGH: Baby "cured" of HIV

While a cure for HIV and AIDS still remains elusive, doctors in Mississippi claimed to have eradicated the HIV virus from a baby by giving her a three-drug regiment within 30 hours of her birth. The mother of the child had not received any pre-natal treatment to prevent transmission, and a blood test had determined that the child was HIV positive at the time of birth. The child, who was two and a half years old at the time of the March announcement, no longer has any traces of the HIV virus in her blood.

HIGH: Face transplants

The practice of transplanting another person's face onto a patient has been around for a few years — and not just on Nip/Tuck.

This year, however, marked many improvements in the field.

Polish doctors claimed to complete the world's fastest face transplant — a 27-hour procedure just three weeks after the patient's accident.

Meanwhile, several patients in the U.S. who received facial transplants in 2012 were shown to have improved blood flow, more blood vessel pathways and improved facial sensation just one year later.

LOW: Emergency birth control doesn't work ... sometimes

European pharmaceutical regulators approved a warning label change that would alert users of Norlevo (levonorgestrel) that it loses potency for women over 165 pounds and does not work in women over 176 pounds. The morning-after pill is a form of emergency birth control that was supposed to prevent pregnancy within 72 hours after having unprotected sexual intercourse. However, with the weight limits, it seems many women may not be able to use it.

HIGH: A big year for ART

Across the world, more than 5 million screaming bundles of joy are born to people who may otherwise never have the experience of having a child without fertility treatments. The International Committee for the Monitoring of Assisted Reproductive Technology (ICMART), who announced the landmark number in October, noted that the first ART baby was born in 1978 using in vitro fertilization. However, more than half of the 5 million ART babies have been born in just the last six years, meaning the technology is improving.

HIGH: Get a pet, save your life

If you need another reason to convince yourself to get a pet, the American Heart Association confirmed what was once an old wives' tale: that having a pet was linked to lower heart disease, lower blood pressure, lower cholesterol levels and lower levels of obesity. Owning a dog was particularly shown to lower cardiovascular risk, maybe because dogs force you to get off your couch and walk them.

LOW: Heroin-like drug spreads overseas

For years, Russia has battled a problem with krokodil or desomorphine, an opioid drug in the same family as heroin and oxycodone. It is more potent than morphine, and is easily made with codeine, paint thinner, gasoline and other over-the-counter products. It also is so toxic that it causes flesh to rot off the user's bones, and the average abuser dies two to three years after beginning to use. Now, evidence shows the drug is spreading across the world, with the first cases reported in the U.S. in September.

Lean pork tenderloin gets a flavour boost from prosciutto, mushrooms and fresh herbs

My choice for an elegant holiday dinner? It's hard to beat a roast, and more often than not my pick is a lean and moist pork tenderloin.

But let's face it, as much as we want to be healthy, there is such a thing as roast that is too lean. A lack of fat often means a lack of flavour. So how to make up this deficit? With plenty of high-flavour ingredients such as prosciutto, fresh herbs, mushrooms and wine.

Prosciutto packs a ton of flavour, and the slight amount of fat it adds is well worth it. As for the herbs, I took a tip from the Italians, who often top off a grilled steak with fresh herbs and a drizzle of olive oil.

Double Pork Roast with Mushroom Marsala Sauce

This recipe serves six. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Ingredients

- 2 pork tenderloin roasts (3/4 to 1 lb each), trimmed of all fat
- 2 tbsp packed fresh rosemary leaves, chopped
- 2 tbsp packed fresh thyme leaves, chopped
- 4 oz thinly sliced prosciutto
- 3 tbsp extra-virgin olive oil, divided
- Kosher salt and ground black pepper
- 1/2 cup finely chopped shallots or onion
- 1/2 lb mushrooms (cremini, white button, shiitake, oyster or a mix), trimmed and sliced
- 1/2 cup dry Marsala wine
- 1 1/4 cups low-sodium chicken broth
- 1 tbsp all-purpose flour

1. Heat the oven to 350 F. Cut down through each tenderloin lengthwise so that you can open it up like a book, but do not cut all the way through. Sprinkle water on the cutting board under the tenderloin and sprinkle a little water on top of the tenderloin (this will help prevent the meat from tearing when you pound it). Cover the tenderloin with plastic wrap and pound the meat using a meat mallet or rolling pin until it is about 1/2-inch thick.

2. Sprinkle half the rosemary and thyme leaves all over the inside of each butterflied and pounded pork tenderloin and spread the prosciutto evenly in one layer over the herbs. Beginning with the long end, roll up the tenderloin tightly, tucking in the ends (as you would a burrito). Use kitchen twine to tie the roll in a bundle, tying it every 2 inches.

3. In a large nonstick skillet over medium-high, heat 1 tablespoon of the oil. Season the pork lightly on all sides with salt and pepper, then add it to the skillet. Sear until golden brown on all sides. Transfer the pork to a shallow baking pan, then roast on the oven's middle shelf until the centre reaches 145 F, about 20 to 25 minutes. Remove the pork from the oven and cover loosely with foil.

4. Meanwhile, make the sauce. Return the skillet to medium heat. Add the remaining 2 tablespoons of oil and the shallots and cook, stirring, until the shallots are golden. Add the mushrooms and cook, stirring often, until the mushrooms give off all their liquid and are lightly browned.

5. Add the Marsala and simmer until almost all of it is reduced. Add 1 cup of the chicken broth and bring back to a boil. In a small bowl whisk the remaining 1/4 cup of chicken broth with the flour. Add the flour mixture to the skillet in a stream while whisking and simmer for 2 minutes. Add any juices that have accumulated from the resting pork to the sauce.

6. Slice the pork crosswise into 1-inch-thick slices. Transfer several slices to each of 6 serving plates. Spoon some of the mushroom sauce over each serving.

SARA MOULTON/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

How to eat, drink and stay healthy this holiday

Seasonal hazards.
Between overindulging and contracting colds, this time of year can take a toll on your vigor

The holidays are a time to burn your candles at both ends, but you have to be careful to not flame out. The pressure created by a combination of social events, family get-togethers, shopping and financial stress can easily weaken or overwhelm your immune system.

Pace yourself: try to have a glass of water for each glass of alcohol. ISTOCK

Eating

Make sure you neither eat too much, nor too little. Overindulging will not only put on a few extra holiday pounds, but makes you more likely to develop esophageal reflux from a distended stomach at bedtime. This overnight trickle of stomach acid bubbling up into the back of your throat while lying flat in bed can not only cause heartburn but may also lead to a sore throat or dry cough.

This is not only a nuisance that is often mistaken for an upper respiratory infection (common cold), but may actually increase your odds of getting a sinus infection or bronchitis by decreasing your resistance. Eating too little may make you more likely to get intoxicated, as the alcohol in a glass of holiday cheer is absorbed much more quickly from an empty stomach.

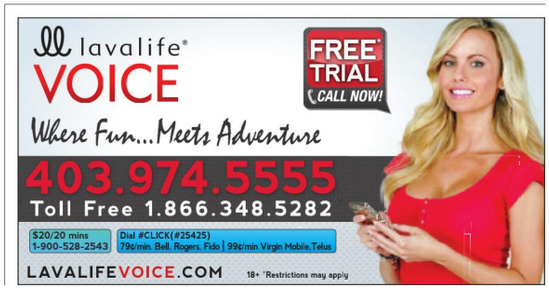
Drinking

With so many social obligations and reasons to celebrate, there is ample opportunity to drink alcohol on a daily basis — and lots of it. "Everything in moderation" should be your motto. Try to drink a glass of water with each alcoholic beverage (one for one). No matter your sex, weight or choice of adult beverage, if you have two or more drinks in under two hours, you will likely be impaired.

Don't drink and drive, and don't let your friends drink and drive. Work out a designated driver in advance with friends, take a taxi or public transportation and don't be afraid to ask if you can sleep over at your host's or friend's home if driving under the influence is your only other option. Drinking coffee will not sober you up.

Being healthy

The 2013-14 influenza season has officially arrived in North America and there are any variety of cold viruses around that have been making people miserable with sore throats, nasal congestion and coughs. Shaking hands, kissing under the mistletoe and travelling on a plane can all spread illness rapidly. Get a flu shot, wash your hands frequently, keep your hands away from your face and blow kisses where you can. METRO



Five steps to becoming a millionaire

Entrepreneurship. Kim Kaupe describes how to go it alone, even if you don't have start-up cash or a business background

EMILY LAURENCE
Metro World News

Three years ago, 28-year-old Kim Kaupe quit her job to pursue a business idea she brainstormed with her co-founder. Now, she's the head of multi-million dollar company ZinePak. Like many people who have a gem of an idea, Kaupe didn't have a business background or any start-up money. Still, she went for it. Kaupe shares her tips with us so you can pursue your own great idea.

1. Find a hole in the marketplace

"I worked at Brides magazine for two years and then got a job at an ad agency. One of my co-workers at the agency used to work at Sony Records. We hatched this idea of putting magazines and music together, and out came ZinePak. We wanted to create special packages for fans. It was something that didn't exist before."

2. Partner with someone who has the strengths you lack

"My business partner and I fit together perfectly because one of us has the strengths that the other person doesn't. Find someone you gel with and shares your views, but also brings a unique perspective."

Quoted

"If you have an idea, tell everyone you can. You never know who that person might know."

Kim Kaupe, co-founder of ZinePak

3. Tell everyone your idea

"There's this common misconception that when you come up with a great idea, you have to keep it to yourself because someone will steal it. It's really the opposite. If you have an idea, tell everyone you can. You never know who that person might know. Or, they could have a way for you to improve your idea that you haven't thought of. We changed our entire product based on a suggestion a random customer emailed us. It pays to listen — literally."

4. If you're not an expert, find people who are

"Neither my partner nor I had a background in business. Going to meet-ups was essential for growing our business. There are meet-ups for everything: small business owner meet-ups, tech meet-ups, entrepreneur meet-ups... When I first started out, I thought I was the only person in the world who faced certain problems. But chances are, most other entrepreneurs that you talk to have wanted to throw their Quickbooks out the window too and might have a great suggestion that can help you. Whatever you need to learn how to do that you can't Google, there's someone out there who can help you."

Kim Kaupe, co-founder of ZinePak, suggests attending small-business meetups and finding ways to keep your overhead low. CONTRIBUTED

5. Keep your overhead low

"The first year, my business partner and I worked from home using only our computers, cell phones and brains. It was just us hustling and cold calling, saying 'Let us make this awesome product for you.' The less supplies you have to buy, the more money you'll make. Think, do you really need a warehouse or paper printing machine? Chances are there's a company out there who it's cheaper to pay than renting space or buying all the materials yourself."

Make sure you get all the tax savings you're eligible for

Tax filing season is never fun, especially when you have a family to worry about. But it doesn't have to be the monster hiding under your bed. They say that facing your fears is rewarding, and this is especially true when you think of the tax savings your family might be eligible for.

Filing your return means that you could get a significant refund and ensures there are no disruptions to your Canada child and family benefit and credit payments.

Regardless of income, all families are eligible to receive $100 each month per child under the age of six as part of the universal child care benefit. You may also be eligible to receive the Canada child tax benefit, depending on your family's total income, province of residence, and number of children.

Also depending on your particular situation, many more tax savings might apply. For example, if your child is involved in certain recreational activities, you can claim the children's arts or fitness tax credits to help cover the costs. You can claim the fees you've paid for eligible activities, up to $500 for each child per credit. This gives you a non-refundable credit of up to $75 per tax credit per child.

We all want to support our children's growth as individuals, but the expenses throughout the year can really add up. Making use of the tax savings available to you can help reduce those expenses in the end. A final word of wisdom: make sure you file your tax return on time. If you don't file on time, your benefit payments may be interrupted. Putting off filing won't make the experience any better, but claiming tax credits and benefits will. So, as it turns out, this monster can be friendly and may have savings to offer you and your family. NEWS CANADA

By the numbers

$100

Regardless of income, all families are eligible to receive $100 each month per child under the age of six as part of the universal child care benefit.

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4 SPORTS

Hockey Canada

Women to lean on younger players

Canada's Olympic women's hockey team has less experience than two previous editions, but believes it has the speed and skill to defend the gold medal in Sochi, Russia.

The 21-player roster that will attempt to win a fourth consecutive Olympic gold in women's hockey was finalized Monday after the release of three players.

The 2014 squad includes a dozen players who beat the U.S. women 2-0 in the 2010 final in Vancouver. The 2010 and 2006 squads each carried over 14 players from the previous Games.

"We're a little bit younger in the experience department," admitted forward Hayley Wickenheiser.

"We're very similar in the type of style we're going to play — a tight forechecking style and trying to counteract with a lot of speed. We have a little bit more offensive depth on the back end than in 2010 so we'll be counting on them to jump into the attack." THE CANADIAN PRESS

World juniors

Drouin, Horvat, McDavid help Canada top Swiss

Jonathan Drouin scored twice to lead Canada's national junior hockey squad to a 4-1 exhibition win over Switzerland on Monday.

It was the final tune-up for Canada, which opens the world junior tournament Thursday against Germany.

Canada finished with a 2-1 exhibition record.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

St. Louis Blues goalie Jaroslav Halak stops a shot from the Flames' Mikael Backlund during the second period in Calgary, Monday. JEFF MCINTOSH/THE CANADIAN PRESS

Flames heat up late in comeback win

NHL. Calgary snaps a three-game slump vs. Blues after more injuries announced

On Monday

Flames	Blues
4	3

Joe Colborne scored the only goal of the shootout to give the Calgary Flames an improbable 4-3 come-from-behind win Monday night over the red-hot St. Louis Blues.

In the shootout, Colborne shot first and beat Jaroslav Halak on a deke for his third goal on four attempts this season.

Reto Berra secured the victory in net by denying TJ Oshie, Derek Roy and Magnus Paajarvi.

Calgary's Mark Giordano forced the shootout, dramatically tying the game with five seconds left in the third period.

Patrick Berglund's holding penalty gave Calgary a power play for the final 1:37 of the third. Flames coach Bob Hartley added more pop to his offence by pulling Berra, making it a six-on-four situation.

The ploy worked as Calgary poured on the pressure. At one point after a slick passing sequence, rookie Sean Monahan — staring at an empty net — had the tying goal roll off his stick.

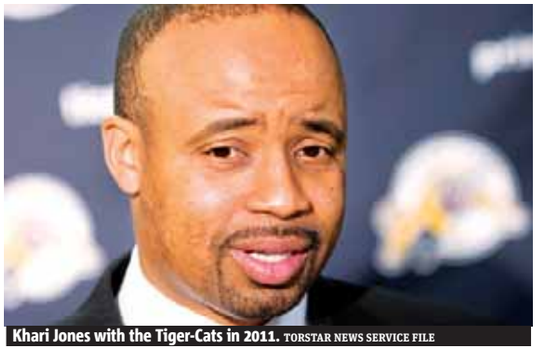
No matter, Hudler's long diagonal pass was hammered in from the face-off dot by Flames captain Giordano, who one-timed a blistering slapshot past Halak to send the sell-out crowd of 19,289 at the Scotiabank Saddledome into a frenzy.

Hudler and Mike Cammalleri also scored for Calgary (14-17-6), which kicked off a five-game homestand. The Flames snapped a three-game winless skid.

The beleaguered team have battled injury issues all year and the latest casualties announced Monday afternoon were left-winger Curtis Glencross (high ankle sprain) and former Blues defenceman Kris Russell (sprained knee), who will both be out for an extended period after injuries sustained in Pittsburgh on Saturday in the final stop of a five-game road trip.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Jones goes from Riderville to B.C. Lions



Khari Jones with the Tiger-Cats in 2011. TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE FILE

The B.C. Lions named Khari Jones as their new offensive co-ordinator Monday.

Jones joins the Lions after two seasons as the quarterbacks coach with the Grey Cup-champion Saskatchewan Roughriders.

"Khari is a young, fresh football mind that brings a key combination of significant playing and coaching experience to the role of offensive co-ordinator," Lions head coach Mike Benevides said in a statement. "After a number of conversations with Khari over the past couple of weeks, I am very excited about his positive approach to the game, the offensive concepts he will bring to our offence and how they will translate on the field.

Prior to joining the Riders, Jones served as Hamilton's offensive co-ordinator in 2011. Jones began his CFL coaching career as the Ticats' quarterbacks coach in '09.

He began his CFL playing career as a quarterback with the Lions in '97 before being dealt to Winnipeg in 2000. In 2001, Jones was named the league's outstanding player after guiding the Bombers to a 14-4 regular-season record.

Jones also played for Calgary (2004) and Hamilton (2005), and twice went to training camp with Edmonton before joining CBC's CFL broadcast crew in 2006.

"It's an honour to return to the same organization that gave me an opportunity to play in this great league many years ago," said Jones.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

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Buick Regal could rule the roads

ALL PHOTOS WHEELBASEMEDIA.COM

2014 Buick Regal. One step closer to being first choice over a Euro sedan instead of an alternative

MALCOLM GUNN
wheelbasemedia.com

The Euro-inspired, North America-built Buick Regal represents a significant shift in thinking for General Motors' entry-premium division.

Since its 2012-model-year-arrival, the Regal has dared to challenge similar BMW, Mercedes-Benz and Audi offerings. It has also become a viable alternative for mid-size entry-luxury buyers, regardless of national origin. Along with the subsequent introduction of the smaller Verano sedan and even smaller Encore wagon, Buick has likely left the dwindling knot of traditional Buick buyers wondering what has become of their cherished brand.

Inside, the reshaped dashboard has a 4.2-inch (10.7 centimetre) display screen between the dual gauge pods that shows basic vehicle info. In addition, a new eight-inch (20-centimetre) touch screen for the climate, navigation, communications and infotainment systems can also be operated through steering-wheel controls.

Under the hood has been simplified. Previously, you could pick between the base turbo-charged 2.0-litre four-cylinder engine with 220 horsepower and 258-pound-feet of torque, and a version that made 270 horsepower and 270 pound-feet of torque (the GS model). Newly optional for turbo models is an all-wheel-drive system that in normal driving splits the torque equally between the front and rear tires, but can deploy up to 90 per cent to the rears when the front wheels start to lose traction. AWD is not offered for the optional (and non-turbo-charged) 2.4-litre four-cylinder engine that combines with a 15-horsepower electric motor and lithium-ion battery pack to make 182 horsepower and 172 pound-feet of torque.

The partial-hybrid system, called eAssist, controls the car's stop-start function to conserve fuel at stoplights and in stop-and-go traffic. The eAssist also kicks in when the Regal is accelerating, but unlike a "full hybrid" powertrain, the electric motor never operates independently of the gas engine. A six-speed automatic is the sole eAssist transmission choice.

The AWD option allows the Regal to keep up with the changing times and the competition, as does the availability of camera-based blind-spot warning and cross-traffic alerts, the latter of which points out traffic that's crossing into your back-up path. There's also forward-collision warning that lets you know when you're too close to traffic in front.

Regal shoppers can choose from base, Premium I, Premium II and GS models. For $34,800 (including destination charges), the base car arrives with a considerable load of gear, including dual-zone climate control, leather seat covers (heated in front), 12-way power driver's seat and an electric parking brake. Other items, such as a power sunroof, navigation with rear-vision camera and an up-level nine-speaker Bose-brand sound system, are added as you move up the trim levels.

At the GS plateau, the standard-equipment list encompasses unique front- and rear-end designs, aero side cladding and rear spoiler, and available 20-inch wheels (19-inchers are standard GS fare, while 17s come on eAssist models). GS models also arrive with larger Brembo-brand front brakes, sport suspension setup and a selectable GS sport mode that increases steering effort, firms up the shock damping and alters the transmission shift points for more spirited driving. Anyway you slice it, the Regal's broader appeal and competitive price tag places it in a closer league with its European and North American mid-size sedan rivals and is a real feather in Buick's cap.

2014 Buick Regal

- **Type.** Four-door, front- /all-wheel-drive mid-size sedan
- **Engines (hp).** 2.0-litre DOHC I4, turbocharged (259); 2.4-litre DOHC I4 (182)
- **Transmissions.** Six-speed automatic; six-speed manual (opt.)
- **Base price (incl. destination).** $34,800

Design

For the 2014 model year, the Regal receives mid-production cycle adjustments that begin with front and rear restyling, including a more prominent grille plus new front and rear LED lighting.

Fuel economy

For 2014, it's down to a single turbo engine pegged at 259 horsepower and a stout 295 pound-feet. It's rated at 10.1 l/100 km in the city and 6.6 on the highway with the six-speed automatic transmission, and 10.2/6.3 with the six-speed manual (available only with the GS).

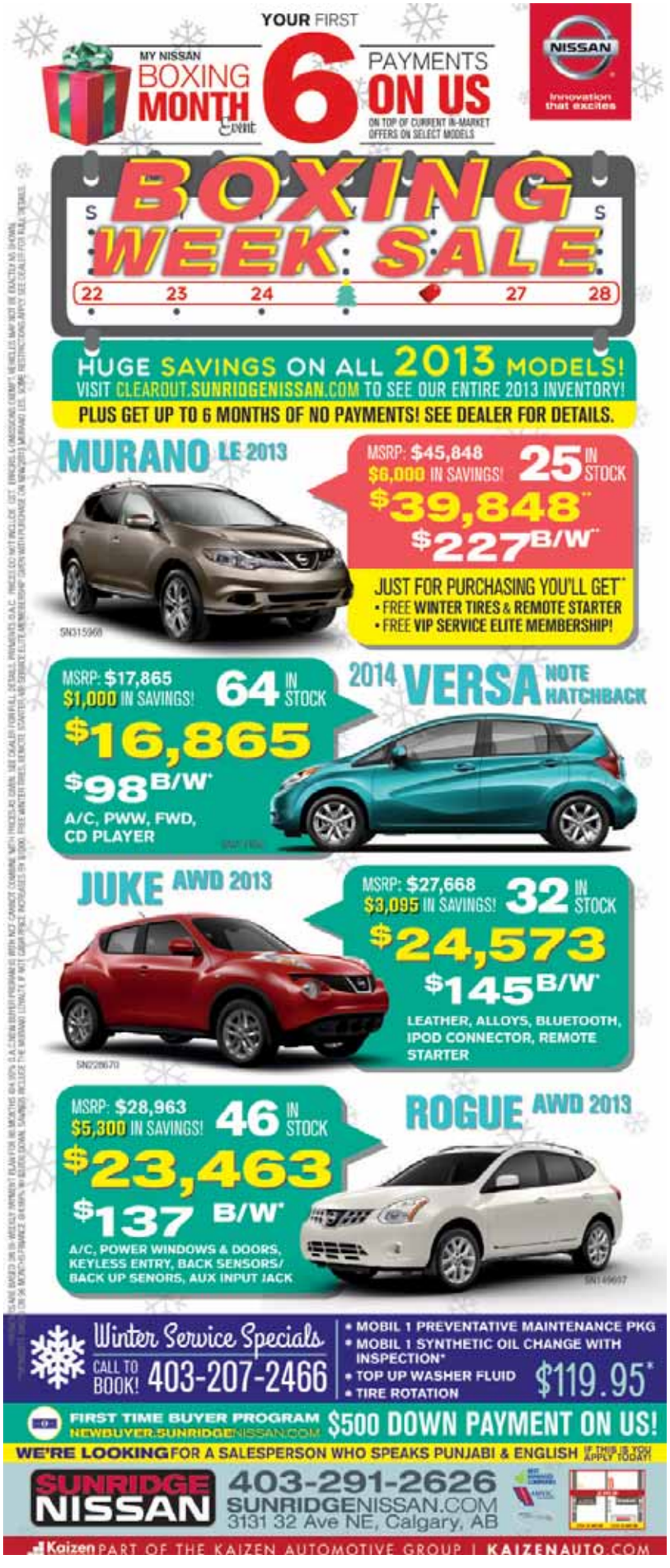
The Buick's interface can change depending on what you want to know.

Compare

1 Acura TL
Base price: $42,000

2 Cadillac ATS
Base price: $37,000

3 Volvo S60
Base price: $40,850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Staying safe on roads this festive season

Driving Force. First and foremost consider all the elements and pay specific attention to tire traction and speed

JIL MCINTOSH
Drive@metronews.ca

Expect the unexpected and make sure you don't get stranded. FORD

Always consider the elements and lower your speed. CHRYSLER

In winter weather, you're always being told to "drive for the conditions." But do you know exactly what that means, and how to stay safe?

"You need to consider snow, ice, slush, darkness, traffic, glare, and how your car responds to cold," says Scott Marshall, director of training for Young Drivers of Canada. "You're not going to have the traction, nor will the drivers around you, so don't put your life in the hands of the driver next to you." Whenever possible, don't stay alongside other vehicles, but drive in a staggered formation. That way, if a driver nearby slides and fishtails, there's far less chance you'll get hit.

Posted speed limits are for ideal conditions, which means on dry roads and with good visibility. Any time that's not the case, reduce your speed. If you're on the highway and you have to drive very slowly to feel safe, get off and take a lower-speed road.

Braking distance gets much longer the faster you're going, and it will take even longer to stop on slippery roads. "The first mistake people make is judging their following distances in car lengths, instead of time," Marshall says. "When the car in front passes something like a light pole, start counting. In normal conditions in the city, you should be two seconds from the driver ahead. Highway speed is three seconds, and once you add slippery conditions, you need to increase that significantly."

Winter tires always give you better traction, even on dry roads, any time the thermometer falls below 7C. At that temperature, their softer compound means they're better able to grip the road than all-season tires. Checking the tire pressure regularly will also ensure that the tires can do their job properly.

If there's a snow plow in front of you, stay at least 7 meters (25 feet) behind it. "Give them a chance to clear the road," Marshall says. Be careful crossing any snow windows the plow leaves behind, since they will affect your control.

Should the weather be really bad, stay home if you can. If you're on the highway and run into bad conditions, get off at the next exit and look for someplace to wait it out, such as a restaurant or hotel. "Being on the shoulder of the highway is not the safest place to stop and wait for a few hours," Marshall says. "Don't get stranded."

Tips

- **Kit.** Keep a personal kit in your car, including gloves, hat, emergency candle with lighter, and non-perishable food items. Women who wear high heels should pack a pair of flat-heeled boots.
- **Cleanliness.** Always clean all the snow off your car completely before driving, including all windows, headlights, and taillights.
- **Washer fluid.** Carry an extra jug of washer fluid in your vehicle at all times.

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KIA

The Power to Surprise

Horoscopes

♈ Aries
March 21 - April 20
Something you have been working on for a long time will bear fruit today. Others may say you've been lucky but the fact is you have laboured long and hard to get this far.

♉ Taurus
April 21 - May 21
You will handle everything life throws at you with grace and style. The planets endow you with limitless self-confidence and the kind of faith that moves mountains.

♊ Gemini
May 22 - June 21
You will have to take on new responsibilities over the next few days, including some of a financial nature. Show the world you have what it takes to handle difficult situations.

♋ Cancer
June 22 - July 23
Although the sun in Capricorn brings partnership problems to the fore, Mercury in your opposite sign will make it easier for you to see things from the other person's point of view.

♌ Leo
July 24 - Aug. 23
Matters of a routine nature will take up a lot of time but once you have completed your tasks you can move on to something more interesting. Whatever else you do today, don't cut corners.

♍ Virgo
Aug. 24 - Sept. 23
This should be a productive day for you — you will get a lot done in a short space of time. Make the most of it because as you move into the New Year not everything will come quite so easily.

♎ Libra
Sept. 24 - Oct. 23
Partners and colleagues will demand more of your time and attention today and if you are smart you will give it to them.

♏ Scorpio
Oct. 24 - Nov. 22
You will get the chance to move up in the world in some way over the next few days and even though your mind may be on other things you must grab the opportunity.

♐ Sagittarius
Nov. 23 - Dec. 21
Money matters must come first today and with Mercury joining the sun in the main financial area of your chart you will get the chance to balance the books.

♑ Capricorn
Dec. 22 - Jan. 20
Decide what is the most important thing you should be doing right now and do it to the exclusion of all else. Your efforts will not be wasted.

♒ Aquarius
Jan. 21 - Feb. 19
What happens today will convince you that life is good and about to get even better. The only reason that your thoughts have been so negative of late is because you have allowed your emotions to blot out common sense. Time to rebalance.

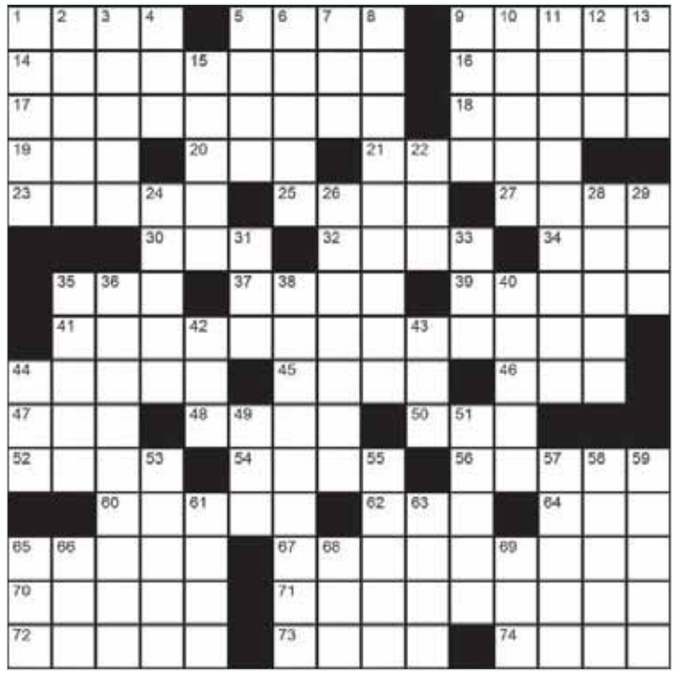
♓ Pisces
Feb. 20 - March 20
Try not to get too emotionally involved in other people's problems. Life is full of ups and downs, and so a more light-hearted approach from you today will be an example for them to follow.

SALLY BROMPTON

Crossword: Canada Across and Down

See today's answers at metronews.ca/answers.

BY KELLY ANN BUCHANAN



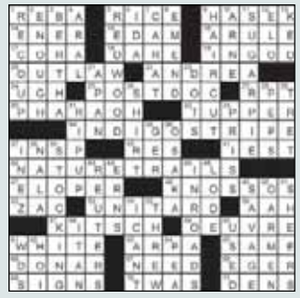
Across

1. "Hush! I __ __ the phone!"
5. Gentle
9. "__ Old St. Nicholas"
14. Artist's work
16. Grow like _ __
17. Saint-Jean-sur-__, Quebec
18. Distributes
19. Pitcher's stat.
20. _ __ mode
21. Pancake dish of Russia
23. Mailing enclosures, commonly
25. Nero's 651
27. Poinsettia part
30. Texter's "incidentally"
32. Jump
34. __-Cone
35. Overseas MTV honour (acronym)
37. Alum
39. Barbera's cartooning partner
41. The Huron Carol bit: "That mighty __ __ / Sent angel choirs instead."
44. Via ship: 2 wds.
45. Singer/songwriter Marvin
46. Prefix to "light"
47. Appropriate
48. Thailand currency
50. Premium car
52. French for "here and there": Ici __ __
54. Ancient portico
56. Distressed cries
60. Saskatchewan village between Regina and Saskatoon
62. American airer since '71
64. Furrow-maker
65. Helicopter part
67. Ontario community east of London
70. Satire
71. Where Canada is trying to lay territorial claim, as in recent headlines: 2 wds.
72. Holiday hue
73. Fellows
74. Belonging to an undercover agent

Down

1. __-ski
2. Ballerina/actress Ms. Shearer of The Red Shoes (1948)
3. Killer whales
4. To the __ power
5. Richard of Night Court
6. Ancient tale
7. Prevarication
8. __ Canada (Book publisher)
9. Actress Ms. Gertz
10. Buck of Hee Haw
11. "Oh, the weather outside is frightful..." Christmas carol: 3 wds.
12. Jeans brand
13. Li'l length units
15. Spread
22. Irish coronation stone, __ Fail
24. Online retail discount
26. Mott's beverage
28. Boredom
29. Bygone bird
31. Early 1920s President [monogram]
33. __ Beta Kappa
35. The Prince of __ (1998)
36. Festive foliage
38. Position in hockey: 2 wds.
40. When management might return from lunch, __ __
42. Music legend Mr. Calloway
43. Bird bill
44. UK defence contractor, _ _ _ Systems
49. Mount __ (Volcano of Japan)
51. Frankincense and __
53. Solo
55. Furious
57. __ it up (Celebrate)
58. Candy-on-a-stick
59. Monica of tennis
61. Welsh opera singer Mr. Terfel
63. Furry friends
65. Semi
66. Hockey Hall of Famer
68. __ _ Turn (Road sign)
69. Madonna's first hubby ... his initials-sharers

Yesterday's Crossword



Sudoku

How to play
Fill in the grid, so that every row, every column and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1-9. There is no math involved.

	9		7	8				
	2		5				1	9
		4	2			3		
						9	4	8
6				4				3
4	3	2						
		8			9	6		
7	1				5		9	
				1	3		5	

Yesterday's Sudoku

5	1	2	3	4	8	6	9	7
8	7	4	2	6	9	5	1	3
9	3	6	5	1	7	8	4	2
1	6	7	4	2	5	3	8	9
2	5	8	9	7	3	1	6	4
3	4	9	1	8	6	7	2	5
4	8	5	6	3	2	9	7	1
7	9	1	8	5	4	2	3	6
6	2	3	7	9	1	4	5	8

Weather

TODAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY
MAX: 1° MIN: -4°	MAX: 4° MIN: -7°	MAX: 7° MIN: -3°

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ANDREW SCHULTZ METEOROLOGIST
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WEEKDAYS 5:30 AM

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unicef Save the Children

IKEA

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